

COVID-19 Antibody Test Specimen Collection and Submission Instructions



Pre-Approval Requirement	<p style="text-align: center;">***PREAPPROVAL REQUIRED***</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This document applies only for submissions to the DSHS <i>Austin</i> Laboratory. For information regarding submission to other Public Health Laboratories in Texas, contact your local health department via the process described below. • Contact your Regional and/or Local Health Department (https://www.dshs.texas.gov/regions/2019-nCoV-Local-Health-Entities/) and obtain Epidemiologist (Epi) approval to test. • Specimens WILL NOT be tested without prior Epidemiologist (Epi) approval. • All REQUIRED items on the G-2A submission form(s) must also be completed prior to testing. See additional details under “Specimen Shipping” section.
Testing Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to the guidance in the following link https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/ under “Information for: Public Health” on the right-hand panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evaluating and Testing Persons for COVID-19 (CDC) – Recommendations for Antibody Testing ○ DSHS COVID-19 Case Report Form <p>The decision to test a patient is appropriately made by the patient’s attending healthcare provider in consultation with public health. Specimens from individuals who meet CDC recommendations for testing will be prioritized based on resources. If resources at DSHS are at capacity, specimens meeting testing criteria may be forwarded to other public health laboratories or CDC for testing.</p>
Specimen Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only submit the following specimen types for antibody testing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Serum in a gel separator tube or transport tube ○ Plasma collected in EDTA • IF you have received an Epi approval to send additional specimen types (nasopharyngeal swab, oropharyngeal swabs, etc.) to the DSHS Laboratory for COVID-19 PCR testing, you must complete a separate G-2V form and follow the collection and submission instructions here: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DSHS COVID-19 Specimen Collection and Submission Instructions (PCR test)
Specimen Collection and Handling	<p><u>Serum and plasma</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect enough blood (~10 mL) to obtain at least 3-5 mL of serum or plasma in a blood collection tube (do not freeze serum or plasma separator collection tubes). • For serum specimens, allow specimens to clot completely before centrifugation and separation. • The serum or plasma blood collection tubes need to be centrifuged and separated within 2 hours from the time of collection. • Transfer the serum or plasma from the collection tube into a transport tube for shipment (serum does not need to be transferred if collected in a gel separator tube). • Keep tubes sealed at all times. • Serum or plasma specimens can be subjected to a maximum of 1 freezing/thawing cycle before testing. • Refrigerate all specimens at 2-8°C promptly after collection and ship overnight to DSHS on ice packs. If specimens will not arrive at DSHS within 4 days of collection, they should be stored frozen at -20°C or colder and shipped on dry ice (frozen serum in a gel separator tube will not be acceptable). • Maintain proper infection control when collecting specimens. Guidance can be found at https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/isolation/index.html#a4 • All specimens must be labeled with at least two patient specific identifiers (e.g. patient’s name [First and Last] and date of birth). The identifiers must appear on both the primary specimen container and the associated G-2A submission form.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see the specimen identification guidelines at https://www.dshs.texas.gov/lab/mrs_specimens.shtml#Label for additional details and acceptable patient identifiers. • Make sure the patient's name and other approved identifiers on the form exactly match what is written on the specimen tube. • Each sample container must be labeled with the specimen type.
Specimen Shipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport specimens to the laboratory as soon as possible. • If shipping specimens through a courier, specimens may be shipped Monday-Thursday for receipt at the DSHS Laboratory Tuesday-Friday. Weekend delivery will be considered on a case by case basis and requires PRE-APPROVAL by DSHS. Please contact your Regional and/or Local Health Department to initiate the weekend approval process. • Complete a DSHS G-2A Specimen Submission Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A separate G-2A is required for each specimen submitted. • A submitter ID is required to submit specimens. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To request a submitter ID, please complete the <i>Submitter Identification (ID) Number Request Form</i> available at www.dshs.texas.gov/lab/MRS_forms.shtml#Microbiological and follow the instructions for submitting the form. ○ Please include an email address in section 3 of the <i>Submitter ID Request Form</i> for a faster response. • Section 8 of the G-2A For Payor Source: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please mark "IDEAS" as the Payor Source • Check the SARS CoV-2 Antibody box in the COVID-19 Section. • Do not check any other boxes in Sections 4,5,6,9. • Please find a sample G-2A submission form here. • Place the G-2A form <i>and</i> DSHS COVID-19 Case Report Form on the outside of the Styrofoam container but inside the cardboard shipper. This will enable the laboratory to easily identify the specimens as COVID-19 specimens. • Follow international Air Transportation Regulations for shipping of Category "B" Biological Substances. Infectious Subs. brochure - PHMSA • Specimens submitted without the proper DSHS G-2A form and/or complete information may be delayed. • Ship to the physical address: TX DSHS Laboratory Services, ATTN: Walter Douglass 512-776-7569, 1100 W. 49th Street, Austin TX, 78756 • Record the shipping tracking number and notify your Regional and/or Local Health Department and DSHS that a specimen is being shipped.
Results Reporting and Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Regional and/or Local Health Department will notify the healthcare facilities or personnel of test results. • Laboratory results will also be mailed to the submitter unless the submitter has requested reports via fax or online. • To obtain reports by fax, please use the Submitter Identification (ID) Number Request Form and follow the instructions to update your preferred method for delivery of test results. • To obtain reports online, please complete the Remote Data Services Facility Security Agreement and Remote Data Services User Agreement forms and follow the instructions. Email the request to remotelabsupport@dshs.texas.gov. • For other laboratory-related questions, please email LabInfo@dshs.texas.gov or call (512) 776-7578. • General information and updates about the ongoing COVID-19 Outbreak may be found here https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/